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ABSTRACT

This research examined the relationships among three variables--teacher personality, teacher pupil control attitudes, and teacher pupil control behavior--to determine whether teacher personality or pupil control attitudes were the better predictor of pupil control behavior. Subjects were 102 junior high school teachers. The major finding of the study was that relationships among all three variables were significant. The relationship between teacher personality and attitudes toward pupil control was moderately high and positive (.60). Relationships between personality and pupil control behavior and between attitudes and pupil control behavior were positive and moderate (.31 and .24 respectively). Although the relationships of both personality and control attitudes to control behavior were close, attitude proved to be a slightly stronger predictor for the respondents in this study. The observations generally confirmed the validity of the behavioral instruments. The methods used in this study can provide a fairly uncomplicated, cost-effective avenue to the important area of discipline improvement through more informed teacher selection and placement and improved teacher training programs for both preservice and inservice teachers. (Author/JD)

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG TEACHER PERSONALITY, PUPIL CONTROL ATTITUDES, AND PUPIL CONTROL BEHAVIOR

Doris W. Bush

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ABSTRACT

This research examined relationships among three variables--teacher personality, teacher pupil control attitudes, and teacher pupil control behavior--to determine whether teacher personality or pupil control attitudes were the better predictor of pupil control behavior. The major finding of the study was that relationships among all three variables were significant. The relationship between teacher personality and attitudes toward pupil control was moderately high and positive (.60). Relationships between personality and pupil control behavior and between attitudes and pupil control behavior were positive and moderate (.31 and .24 respectively). Although the relationships of both personality and control attitudes to control behavior were close, attitude proved to be a slightly stronger predictor for the respondents in this study. The observations generally confirmed the validity of the behavioral instrument. The methods used in this study can provide a fairly uncomplicated, cost-effective avenue to the important area of discipline improvement through more informed teacher selection and placement and improved teacher training programs for both preservice and inservice teachers.

Relationships Among Teacher Personality, Pupil Control Attitudes, and Pupil Control Behavior

The research described in this paper was designed to examine relationships among teacher personality, teacher attitudes toward pupil control, and teacher control behavior in the classroom. An attempt was made to discover whether there are relationships among the three variables, whether the teacher's classroom pupil control behavior can be reliably predicted when teacher personality and teacher pupil control attitudes are known, whether teacher pupil control attitudes or teacher personality is the better predictor of pupil control behavior, and how well the instrument chosen to reveal pupil control behavior reflects the teacher's actual control behavior as observed in the classroom (Bush, 1984).

The problem of discipline in the schools is complex and multi-faceted. Widespread concern about the problem has resulted in a growing body of research which has examined various elements which shape and influence the classroom teacher's control behavior, behavior which causes great and far-reaching effects in the teaching-learning process and in the personal development of the student. Researchers have examined one or more of the three variables under investigation in the present study from different points of view, in varying combinations, and using various concepts.

Where the studies have overlapped, they have been remarkably consistent in their discoveries and conclusions. They have found humanistic methods of control to be more effective than authoritarian ones, and they have found positive relationships between teacher personality types and teacher attitudes toward pupil control (see, for example, Brophy and Rohrkemper, 1982; Byrd, Coble and Adler, 1982; Crow and Bonney, 1975; Halpin, Halpin, and Harris, 1982; Hamachek, 1972; Helsel, 1971; Kindsvatter and Levine, 1980; Kounin and Gump, 1961; Kremer, 1974; Rohrkemper and Brophy, 1980; Victor, 1970 and 1976; Wakefield, Cunningham and Edwards, 1975; and Willower, 1977). Few studies have examined these two variables in relation to teacher classroom behavior; and none has investigated them in relation to teacher classroom control behavior, although several researchers expressed the belief that control behavior would be related positively to the teacher's personality type and ideology and suggested that studies be made to determine if their expectations are borne out in fact.

Method

Teacher personality, attitudes toward pupil control, and pupil control behavior were examined and classified according to the degree of authoritarian or humanistic characteristics which were manifest. Personality, attitudes,

and control behavior may be viewed along continua which have authoritarian or closed at one extreme and humanistic or open at the other.

Authoritarians are characterized by a rigid, punitive, moralistic outlook and a low tolerance for frustration. They place great emphasis upon hierarchial order and avoid compromises. They are anxious, fearful, exacting, reserved, rigid, critical, rule-bound, and doubtful of their own worth. They see students as untrustworthy, needing strictness and punishment. They are inclined to rely on absolute authority, and this reliance is arbitrary.

Humanists are more flexible and adaptable. They are able to handle stress and frustration without fatigue. They are secure; have a strong, positive self concept; and do not fear criticism. They respect students and see them as trustworthy individuals. Their reliance on authority is both rational and tentative. Authority is seen as not absolute. The fundamental difference between authoritarians and humanists is the extent to which there is reliance on absolute authority (Rokeach, 1960:35).

Population

All teachers of grades seven and eight in eight county school systems in eastern central Tennessee, a total of 216 teachers, were selected to participate in this study. One

hundred and two usable returns were received. Nine packets were undeliverable or unusable because questions were left unanswered or answers to questions were given other than those from which respondents were instructed to select. There were 102 usable returns, or 49 percent of the population.

Instruments

The forty-item Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E (RDSE) was used to measure open (humanistic) and closed (authoritarian) systems of belief. Subjects respond on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I agree very much" to "I disagree very much." The higher the score obtained, the more closed or authoritarian was the personality of the respondent. Rokeach, using both split-half and test-retest techniques, reported reliabilities ranging from .68 to .93 using samples of students from various universities, English workers, and residents of a Veteran's Administration domiciliary (Rokeach, 1960).

The Pupil Control Inventory (PCI), developed by Willower, Eidell, and Hoy (1973), provides an operational measure of teachers' attitudes toward discipline. The instrument contains twenty statements about pupil control positive to the custodial view. Subjects respond on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly

disagree." The higher the score achieved on the instrument, the more closed the attitude. The authors referred to the work of Rokeach (1960) for their definitions of open (humanistic) and closed (custodial). Reliability was checked by calculating split-half reliability coefficients which ranged from .91 and .95 to .83 and .91.

The Behavioral Consequences Preference Survey, Form S (BCFS) was developed and copyrighted by Don Cheser.* It consists of ten vignettes, each describing a different student behavior problem such as lying, cheating, ill manners, and rule-breaking. For each vignette, each subject is presented five actions and is asked to choose the best one to take according to his/her beliefs and experience. Each of the five consequences is assigned a value of one to five. The values of each chosen action are summed to provide a score which purports to reveal the disciplinary style of the teacher. As the test was written, the higher scores indicated more effective disciplinarians and the lower scores the less effective ones. Since scoring on the other two instruments indicated the opposite, that is, the higher the score the less effective, scoring was reversed on this instrument so that higher scores indicated the less effective

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disciplinarians and lower scores the more effective. Several means of interpreting scores on this instrument are given so that teachers with differing types and amounts of training and experience may compare their scores with other teachers who are similar to themselves. The scoring system for all levels of training and experience combined were used for this study. Reliability of the instrument, according to the author, is .76; and validity is .92.

The Discipline Analysis Inventory (DAI) (Lasley, 1981) is an observation instrument containing four categories. The type of organization in the classroom at the time of a misbehavior is recorded in the first part. The misbehavior and the length of its duration are noted in the second part. The type of response to the misbehavior is recorded in category three, and the student's response to the teacher's action is recorded in part four. A separate instrument is completed for each behavior observed. Values assigned to the type of response indicated in category three were summed and then averaged, and the same process of scoring is repeated for category four. Scores in each of the two categories ranged from one to three with the lower scores indicating the more effective actions of the teacher and the higher scores indicating the less effective.

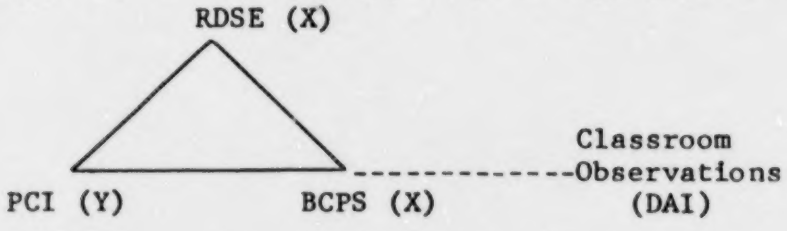
Procedure

The three questionnaires were mailed to teachers with a cover letter explaining the project, encouraging their participation, and requesting an invitation to make a classroom observation. A second letter was mailed approximately two weeks after the first to teachers who had not responded.

Twelve teachers invited the researcher to observe in their classrooms. Appointments were made for six visits, and the observations were completed during late May and early June of 1984. Following each observation, the school principal was asked to classify the teacher's effectiveness as a disciplinarian as high, moderate, or low. Scoring of the questionnaires returned by the observed teachers was delayed until the observations were completed to reduce the possibility of observer bias.*

Design for Analysis

Three relationships between variables were analyzed in this study. These relationships may be expressed as a model:



*For future studies we would tighten up this observation process: random sample to observe; inter-rater agreements, etc. This was, however, a voluntary study done in real classrooms.

Using the Pearson r formula, correlation coefficients were computed for the relationships between (1) X and Y, (2) X and Z, and (3) Y and Z (see Tables 1 and 2). Raw scores of the questionnaires for the teachers who were observed were ranked (see Tables 3 and 4). The Spearman rho formula for the three questionnaires and section three of the DAI was applied to determine the strength of relationships of the rankings of the six observed teachers on the various instruments (see Table 5).

Results

Each relationship examined in this study was found to be both positive and significant. The correlation coefficient for the relationship between the variables personality (X) and attitudes (Y) was +.60. The coefficient for the relationship between personality and behavior (Z) was +.24 and, for the relationship between attitudes and behavior, +.31 (see Table 1). The relationship between X and Y proved significant at .01; the relationship between X and Z was significant at .02; and the relationship between Y and Z was significant at .01 (Fisher, 1970:211). Table 2 presents a summary of these values and relationships.

Although all three relationships proved to be significant at or beyond .05, the relationship between personality

and attitude was positive and moderately high; and the relationships between personality and behavior and between attitude and behavior were positive and moderate. Teacher pupil control attitudes proved to have a stronger relationship to pupil control behavior than did personality. The r value for the attitude-behavior relationship was .31 ($p<.01$), somewhat stronger than the r value of .24 ($p<.02$) for the personality-behavior relationship; but these strengths are close in value and, even though statistically significant, are only moderate in strength. Knowledge of either personality characteristics or attitudes about pupil control could have value in predicting teacher pupil control behavior.

TABLE 1

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES X (PERSONALITY), Y (ATTITUDES), AND Z (BEHAVIOR)

Variables	RDSE (X)	PCI (Y)	BCPS (Z)
RDSE (X)	1.00	.60	.24
PCI (Y)		1.00	.31
BCPS (Z)			1.00

Six observations were made. These observations, though limited in number, roughly supported the behavioral instrument (BCPS). For the purpose of examining correlations using rank order rather than raw scores and in an attempt to

see the data more closely, the Spearman rho computation was performed on scores for the six teachers who were observed. Table 3 shows the raw scores for the three survey instruments completed by the six teachers and for categories three and four of the DAI. Category three recorded the nature of the teacher's response to student misbehavior, and category four recorded the response of the student to the teacher's control effort. Table 4 shows the rank order assigned to the raw scores recorded in Table 3, and Table 5 presents the coefficients obtained through the computation of Spearman's rho for the relationships between category three of the DAI and each of the three variables being studied.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN VARIABLES X, Y, AND Z

Variables	df	Value of Pearson's r	Tabled Value	p
X, Y	100	.5974	.2540	<.01
X, Z	100	.2376	.2301	<.02
Y, Z	100	.3113	.2540	<.01

df = N-2

Of the three relationships summarized in Table 5, the correlation between the BCPS and category three of the DAI is the strongest. Although not statistically significant

(probably due to the small number), the correlation of +.67 is moderately high, providing an indication that the relationship between these two variables is worth further study.

TABLE 3

RAW SCORES FOR SURVEY AND OBSERVATION INSTRUMENTS FOR SIX OBSERVED TEACHERS

Teacher	RDSE	PCI	BCPS	DAI Category 3	DAI Category 4
A	171	59	24	1.5	1.0
B	155	51	19	1.2	1.1
C	153	58	32	2.2	2.0
D	151	64	29	1.2	1.0
E	128	54	28	1.8	1.1
F	128	53	23	1.0	3.0

TABLE 4

DATA FOR SPEARMAN'S RHO: RANK ORDER OF SCORES FOR SIX OBSERVED TEACHERS

Teacher	RDSE (X)	PCI (Y)	BCPS (Z)	DAI Category 3
A	6	5	3	4
B	5	1	1	2.5
C	4	4	6	6
D	3	6	5	2.5
E	1.5	3	4	5
F	1.5	2	2	1

TABLE 5

SPEARMAN RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO CATEGORY THREE OF THE DISCIPLINE ANALYSIS INVENTORY

Instruments	DAI Category 3
RDSE (X)	.23
PCI (Y)	.30
BCPS (Z)	.67

Discussion and Recommendations

The expectation expressed by several researchers that a positive relationship exists between teacher personality and control behavior and between teacher beliefs about pupil control and control behavior was confirmed by this study. Each of the relationships investigated proved to be significant and indicative. Victor's belief that personality would be more remote from teacher control behavior than would teacher attitudes (1970) was also confirmed ($r=.24$, $p<.02$; $r=.31$, $p<.01$).

Predictive Values

Although the results of this study were both positive and significant, they were also moderate. Attitude proved to be a slightly better predictor of behavior than did personality, but the closeness of the correlations suggests that

either personality or attitude can be helpful in predicting control behavior since both correlations were significant.

The positive correlation coefficient of .67 for the relationship between teacher response to the BCPS and category 3 of the DAI is moderately strong (see Table 5). On the basis of this finding, we may conclude that the BCPS does, indeed, picture with a fair degree of accuracy actual classroom conditions and actual teacher response to student misbehavior.

A significant amount of research, some of which is documented above, has identified personality traits, teacher attitudes toward pupil control, and pupil control behaviors which are more effective in creating and maintaining a positive classroom environment and in facilitating the teaching-learning process. Models for effective alternatives to ineffective practices and guidelines for school personnel in the matter of effective classroom discipline have been identified (see, for example, Campbell and Achilles, 1982 and Wayson, DeVoss, Kaeser, Lasley, Pinnell, and the Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Discipline, 1982).

The ability to predict or determine the classroom control behavior of teachers and teacher trainees can be valuable in screening and selecting applicants for teaching positions and for admission to teacher training programs.

This knowledge is also of value in providing direction for strengthening teacher training programs intended to help both preservice and inservice teachers develop more effective disciplinary styles.

It is possible to reverse restrictive, custodial styles of experienced teachers according to a study by McDaniel (1983) of inservice teachers taking a graduate course in discipline. The course presented a wide range of theorists who offer alternatives to punishment, authoritarian rule, and custodial values. In conjunction with the study of theory, the teachers studied effective methods and techniques of control and experimented with them in their classrooms. Using the BCPS and a pretest-posttest technique, the researcher found that the scores of the teachers moved significantly toward the positive end on the posttest, which demonstrated that their disciplinary style had become more humanistic.

The McDaniel study supports the belief of other researchers that teachers may use harsh, ineffective means of control because they are unaware of other available options (Lasley, 1981). They may have both a relatively low perception of the knowledge and methods conducive to goal attainment and low expectations of achieving them (Kremer, 1974). As a consequence, they fall back on

tradition and their own personal experiences as students because they do not know what else to do. Teachers are usually expected to survive on conventional wisdom or on one of the more popular psychological approaches. As a result, teachers, especially new ones, develop crude skills and/or simplistic understandings they find awkward or difficult to use. They become convinced that one only learns to deal with misbehavior through experience; but in this case at least, experience is not the best teacher. It may force teachers to choose and develop strategies that have negative consequences both for their students and for themselves (Lasley, 1981). Teacher training programs seldom equip teachers with specific skills and techniques for analyzing and labeling classroom misbehavior (Good and Brophy, 1973). In a related study Rohrkemper and Brophy (1980) found that even among teachers with at least three years' experience and identified by their principals as average or outstanding in dealing with problem students, data suggest widespread knowledge and skill deficiencies in the area of pupil control.

The BCPS seemed to reveal another kind of problem. Several teachers had difficulty responding to the vignettes. The directions for responding to the questionnaire instructed that the most appropriate behavior, in the respondent's

opinion, be checked even though the consequences might not be what the teacher would do in the situation. The directions also instructed teachers to respond as though the consequences offered were the only options available. Even so, marginal comments made by teachers reacting to the vignettes and consequences indicated that the teachers were looking for consequences other than those offered and were seeing options in terms of what was actually available to them. In all but one of the unusable returns, teachers supplied consequences other than those offered. The most frequent "consequence" supplied by the teachers was "none of the above." One or two responses indicated that the student should be paddled even though that was not a listed consequence for the vignette. Other teachers who marked their responses as instructed added in the margin they would actually do something different than what was offered. One frequent comment indicated that guidance counselors were unavailable to them. These responses did not harm the purpose of the instrument, which was to obtain responses as if the consequences offered were the only options available; but rather they indicated two problems. First, teachers sometimes fail to give careful attention to good discipline; and second, many teachers respond more to the symptoms of problems with misbehavior than to causes.

Discipline, after all, is not an end in itself. Its goal is to make learning possible. Discipline, like other activities of the school, should be educational. When control is merely suppressive without being corrective, it fails to have educational value. Punitive consequences are a temporary suppressant at best and can lead to greater problems. Kounin (1980) pointed out that harsh measures have a "ripple effect" in the classroom and spread tension and unrest leading to a decrease in student achievement and an increase in behavior problems. Welsh (1980) noted that both parents and teachers tend to discipline youngsters as they were disciplined, thus perpetuating punitive practices into the future.

Harsh means of control violate principles of democracy, have no intrinsic educational value, and have negative long-range effects. Students do not learn to understand or control their actions, and they fail to realize the standards on which their behavior is judged. They are unable to perceive available alternatives. They are also unlikely to accept responsibility for their acts.

Principals' Classification of Teacher Control Effectiveness

Following each classroom observation, the observer asked the principal to rate the teacher as a disciplinarian.

Each principal rated the teacher who had been observed as excellent and then added without further comment or question from the researcher that the teacher seldom if ever referred students to the administration for disciplinary reasons. This would seem to confirm the finding of Rohrkemper and Brophy (1980) that principals use the teacher's self-reliance in punishing students as a criterion in control ability classification. Those who referred fewer students were viewed as more effective. The principals' ability classifications, then, were influenced more by how seldom teachers called upon the administration for help in handling difficult students and less by what the teachers actually did in their classrooms.

This finding leads to two recommendations. First, those who seek a method of categorizing the disciplinary abilities of teachers should be wary of principals' classifications of them. Second, training programs for administrators should include instruction in what constitutes effective discipline; how to recognize it; and how to foster, support, and encourage it.

Generalizability of Results

We tentatively concluded that the results of this study, conducted in a primarily rural area, are generalizable

to areas which are socio-economically different. Two of the counties included in the study may be classified as urban-industrial and the other six as rural-industrial. In another study using the PCI, Willower and Landis (1970) examined the socio-economic nature of the areas included in their study and the average PCI scores for teachers in each area. They concluded that the socio-economic nature of an area did not appear to bear a clear-cut relationship to teachers' pupil control ideology. In their study, average scores for the PCI in areas corresponding to those in the present study ranged from 57.4 to 57.8. The mean score for PCI responses in the present study was 57.8, resulting in the conclusion that the results of this study are probably generalizable to areas with different socio-economic characteristics.

Need for Further Studies

Several studies have generally concurred in the relationships and interactions of teacher personality and pupil control attitudes. More studies are needed to confirm further these findings. But especially needed are more studies which, like the present one, research the connections between pupil control attitudes and pupil control behavior, then relate them to the dynamics of effective discipline.

Summary

The examination of teacher personality type, teacher pupil control attitudes, and teacher pupil control behavior leads to several suggestions.

. . . Knowledge of teacher personality and attitudes about pupil control can be helpful in predicting teacher pupil control behavior.

. . . Knowledge gained through studies such as this one can be helpful in selecting teachers and in strengthening evaluation and training programs for both preservice and inservice teachers.

. . . Preservice teachers can be tested before their period of training. Training should include simulations and field observations in addition to study of theories and methods. Posttests can help predict the potential for effectiveness of preservice teachers and evaluate the effectiveness of the training program.

. . . Reversal of restrictive, custodial disciplinary styles of experienced teachers is possible through appropriate training.

. . . Principals' classifications of teachers as disciplinarians may often be influenced more by teachers' self-reliance in punishing students than by their actual skill in pupil control.

. . . Training programs for administrators as well as for teachers should include instruction in recognizing, fostering, supporting, and encouraging effective discipline.

. . . The results of this study are probably generalizable to areas with different socio-economic characteristics.

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